PELPUP NEWS

SUMMER EDITION 1968 Number 15

Produced by PELPOP

Pelham PUPPETS

Marlborough, Wiltshire

Above: Supy singing to Cornelia.
Below: Walter Ego and Confido made specially for CREATIVE PLAYTHINGS, Princeton, N.J.

'Letter from Pelpop'

THE PELPUP CLUB,
PELHAM PUPPETS,
MARLBOROUGH.
AUGUST, 1968

Dear Pelpups,

Last year I called "The Year of the Dougal", and it certainly was. I am glad to say he is still as popular as ever. The "Magic Roundabout" is now on Australian T.V., so we hope to be packing Dougal down under—lucky chap! I would be interested to hear from American Pelpups when they see the "Magic Roundabout" on their screens, particularly telling me which they find the most appealing character. In England Dougal is by far the favourite, although this was not so in France, his place was taken by Zebedee.

Now this year I think will be called "The Year of the Ventriloquial puppet". They are illustrated on the front cover and inside cover. They have large heads with moving mouths and very flexible head movement. The novelty of these new puppets is that you put your free hand through the sleeve of the dress and the puppet now has a hand of its own—think what scope this offers! The puppets can play musical instruments and pick up things in a most realistic and comical manner. In the lower picture you will see that with the aid of an extra manipulator the two puppets can be given two hands each. The centre operator, Monique Touillet, from France, is holding the two puppets Fido and Walter. Margaret Saladin, her friend, puts both her hands into the dog's paws and plays the accordion, and Gillian Lawton, who is good with a guitar anyway, plays it for Walter, who is not so good.

Although most of the continental puppeteers are using rod puppets, I do not think they will ever replace the string variety. Marionettes have a charm and style of entertainment that will live for a long time—after all, how long

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have they been going now? About 2,000 years. The marionette show is deeply rooted. Nevertheless, this new style of puppet has some great advantages; they are simple to handle and work. A couple shoved in a bag and taken along to a party could create a lot of fun. They also would be very useful in your next show. They could bob up by the side of the stage and entertain during intervals or during scene changes. The boy would make a good compère announcing each item from the side of the stage. He would be helpful when going round with the hat if a collection is taken, or for handing out programmes. Incidentally, all the things the puppets are holding, such as a hat, umbrella, etc., are extra props and are not sold with the puppets, but they can be obtained from a good toy shop. Puppets with moving mouths, including the dog, cost 65/6 each, and the girl with moving eyes costs 85/6.

Competition Results

The playwriting competition was won by Dawson Corley of Louisiana, U.S.A., for the "Great Sleigh Mystery" (prize—2 puppets).

I'm giving two 2nd prizes, so that there will be 1 puppet for David Riley of Wigan for "Balloon Baloney" and 1 puppet for Melvyn Bagshaw of Rochdale for "The Invasion of the Pelham Puppet Factory". I admit the last play is very short but the idea has possibilities.

There is no photographic competition this time, so those entries which I have received will be kept until next time. The reason is that there were so few photographs submitted. However, I shall expect more during the winter months—so get your cameras out and see if you can take a picture with plenty of action in it. Remember, black and white photos have just as much chance of winning as colour prints. They are in fact better for block making.

There have been a number of puppet events since the last magazine. There was the Puppet Festival, organised by Christopher Somerville and Eric Bramall at Colwyn Bay, last May. It was an international affair with participants from 15 different countries. You can read an article describing some of the shows by Jan Bussell in this magazine. The article, with his permission, was taken from U.N.I.M.A. news sheet. In case you are not too

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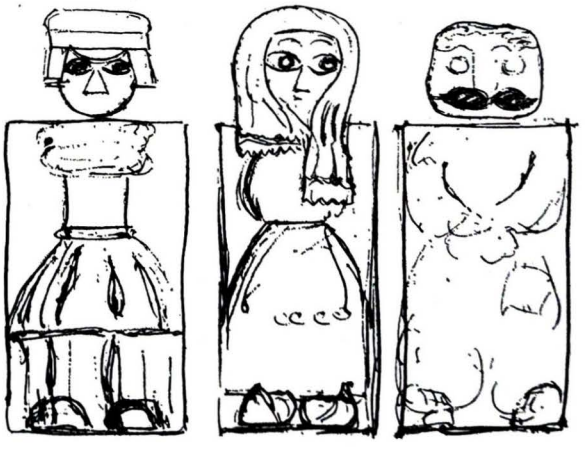
Summer Edition 1968, Number 15.

sure what U.N.I.M.A. stands for you will know all about it when you read Bill Meacock's account of this International Puppet Association. Congratulations to Jan Bussell who has been elected the new president of U.N.I.M.A. This is a great honour, both for him and for Britain, because it is the first time the "presidency" has been held by a Briton. He and his wife, Ann Hogarth, are performing at Skegness on the pier, so don't miss his show if you are holidaying there.

I would like to tell you about the State Puppet Theatre of Budapest, which performed "The Wooden Prince" and "Petrouchka" at the Little Theatre, Bristol last month. The fascinating thing about this performance was the way all puppet techniques were used, each one to their best advantage. "The Wooden Prince" was most superbly rendered to music which made you feel you might be seeing the very best in ballet as well as top professional puppetry. Great use was made of ultra violet light, thus enabling as many as 8 pairs of hands (human) to float around the otherwise black background. The coloured gloves were worn by operators dressed completely in black. When a flood was sent by the Forest Fairy a plastic sheet, painted to give the effect of water, was slowly raised, and the prince, floundering on the surface could then be seen to submerge and slowly sink.

In the second half we saw "Strawinsky Petrouchka". It is the story of a puppeteer in his show which is held in the market square of St. Petersburg, Petro, the ballerina, and the Moor dance before the public. In the next act when the performance is over, you see the puppets, which are hanging helplessly from their strings, suddenly wriggle free of them and leap out of the stage as rod puppets. This is a very subtle way of "bringing them to life". As rod puppets they are now able to fight and generally move around much more easily. Petro bravely fights the Moor, who has been stealing the affections of the ballerina, but poor Petro, who is much smaller is stabbed to death. His silhouette comes up on a curtain set to one side of the stage. Here shadow puppetry is used. He mocks his master, showing that his spirit is released from his magic spell and he will live for ever.

There are three clever ideas I would like to describe to you:—As the curtains rise to an empty stage, funny square figures enter. Their bodies were rectangular boards, about 2′ x 5′, on which their bodies were painted. A large head hinged on top. Obviously there was an operator behind each figure, rather like a sandwich man, who made them swirl around to music. They all line up along the front of the stage, their heads then drop backwards, leaving a screen on which the whole performance took place. They symbolized the peasants of St. Petersburg. At the end of the show their heads swing up and they are manoeuvred around the stage and leave one by one.



The second idea, amongst dozens of dancing, swirling puppets that swing across the stage during the lively dancing scene in the market square, is this comical pair. They twist round and round like this and you are puzzled as they open out, and you see two smiling faces.

Thirdly, we saw a symbolic puppet of a man who drinks too much. The head is a transparent bottle, so you can see red liquid splashing around inside it. As he dances and drinks from the bottle in his hand (human), the level of the liquid in the bottle goes down as that in his head goes up.

The other show I wanted to tell you about is the Japanese Bunraku Theatre which came to London last June. Their style of performance is quite unique and it is very old and traditional, dating back to the 17th century. The puppets are about 4′ to 5′ tall and are operated by three manipulators. Although they are dressed in black they are clearly visible throughout the whole performance. No. 1 operator, whose name appears in the programme against that of the puppets, seldom wears a black mask. He supports the puppet and controls its head which involves mouth, eye and eyebrow movement. He also controls the puppet's right arm. No. 2 crouches behind and manoeuvres the legs of the puppet, and he does a lot of stamping with his own feet when the puppet rampages around the stage. The 3rd person controls the puppet's left hand and with his other hand he passes up props, such as a sword, scroll, or drinking vessel. All the time a narrator is singing the parts of each puppet, interposed with explanatory text and accompanied by music from a number of "shamiseus", the Japanese counterpart to our guitar.

I include an article about the DaSilva Marionettes. I met Ray and Joan at the Puppet Festival and I know he would welcome any Pelpups at his shows in Cambridge.

A note for Canadian Pelpups. There will be a special promotion of our puppets in the Hudson Bay Stores of Calgary, Saskatoon, Regina, Edmonton and Winnipeg during the month of October. I hope those who live near will look in.

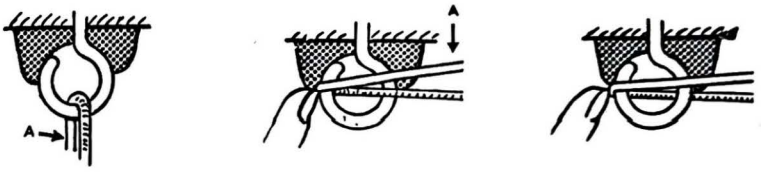
Good luck to everyone and happy holidays.

Pelpop

Untangling

Puppets are happy only when they are hanging full-length from their controls or when their strings are properly wrapped up and the folded controls are packed away in their box. There are other occasions, such as when they fall to the ground or are thrown into a toy cupboard in a heap, when they are miserable and become all tangled up in their own strings. Should this misfortune occur follow these simple instructions on how to make use of the anti-tangling device on the control. The idea is to unhook all the strings, except the two running to the head, and draw each string out of the tangle (when one end of the string is free this is a simple process). Lay them out as illustrated and return them in the following order:—leg strings, handstrings and lastly back string. If it is an S.M. start with the shoulder strings. The principle of the device (patented 1951) is to allow you to disconnect the strings from the control in order that you may be able to sort them out and return them to the same screw-eyes. The rubber buffers prevent the string from coming off the hooks during normal use, and the coloured buffers help you to return the correct strings to the right hooks. The open side of the hook faces forward, therefore you know you must pass one of the run-through strings (A) round the front of the hook and pull directly backward to force the string between the rubber and the end of the hook.

The back string terminating in a loop should be detached in just the same manner, with your finger through the loop. Position string as in third diagram and twist finger.



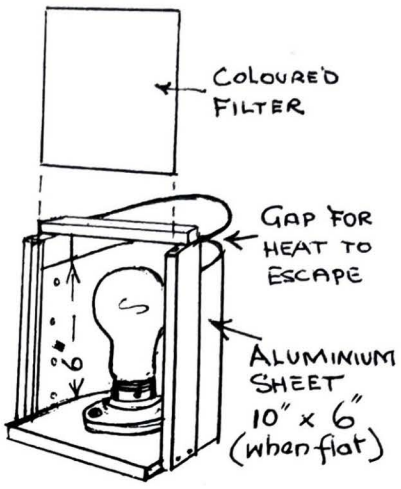
Controls

The Crossbar control on the left is nearest to the early English control which was rigidly fixed in the form of a cross. It is necessary for our control to fold in order that it may be packed away in a box. Gradually the upright control became more generally used by amateurs and professionals. I favour the Crossbar for its simplicity and dexterity, and you can hold two or even three together in one hand. Who could do that with an upright control? The Crossbar control is simpler to untangle should a misfortune occur.

Some people prefer run-through strings which control the legs and hands to detcahable rocking bars found on the upright controls. They do tend to become frayed and eventually break, but a little care and precaution will save unexpected breakages. As soon as they become a little furry, usually at the point where they run through the screw eyes, rub this part of the string between your fingers, spreading the wax, thus restoring its appearance. If they become very dry and furry rub with beeswax. Here, a word of warning—do not overdo this or the strings will not slide freely.

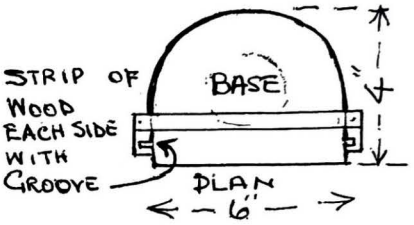
Lighting

Lighting is always a problem. Very often good shows are spoilt by bad lighting, and sometimes too much light is used, and this shows all round the stage and produces shadows of the manipulators on the ceiling. Lighting should be subtle and ideally it should be controlled directionally and in intensity. The use of coloured filters greatly enhances a show.



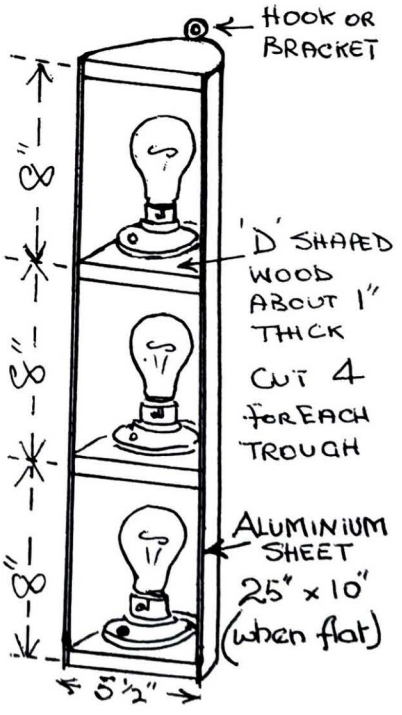
For beginners I would not suggest complicated sets of made-up lights. I would suggest the use of ready-made equipment, such as an Angle Poise shaded reading lamp, or those clip-on inspection lamps, fairy lights or even a good strong torch (which incidentally is also very useful as a spotlight for a dimly lit stage).

This page is for those who want portable lighting equipment and know how to handle electric wiring, and can make good, safe connections—but do get your father or someone competent to check those wires *before* you switch on if you are in any doubt.



I suggest three lights for either side of the stage, but do not use more than 60 watts in each because even this size become very hot when boxed in. You can buy sheet aluminium, though tin sheet is much cheaper, but not of such good reflecting qualities. It is also harder to cut. You will require a piece 6″ x 10″ for each reflector.

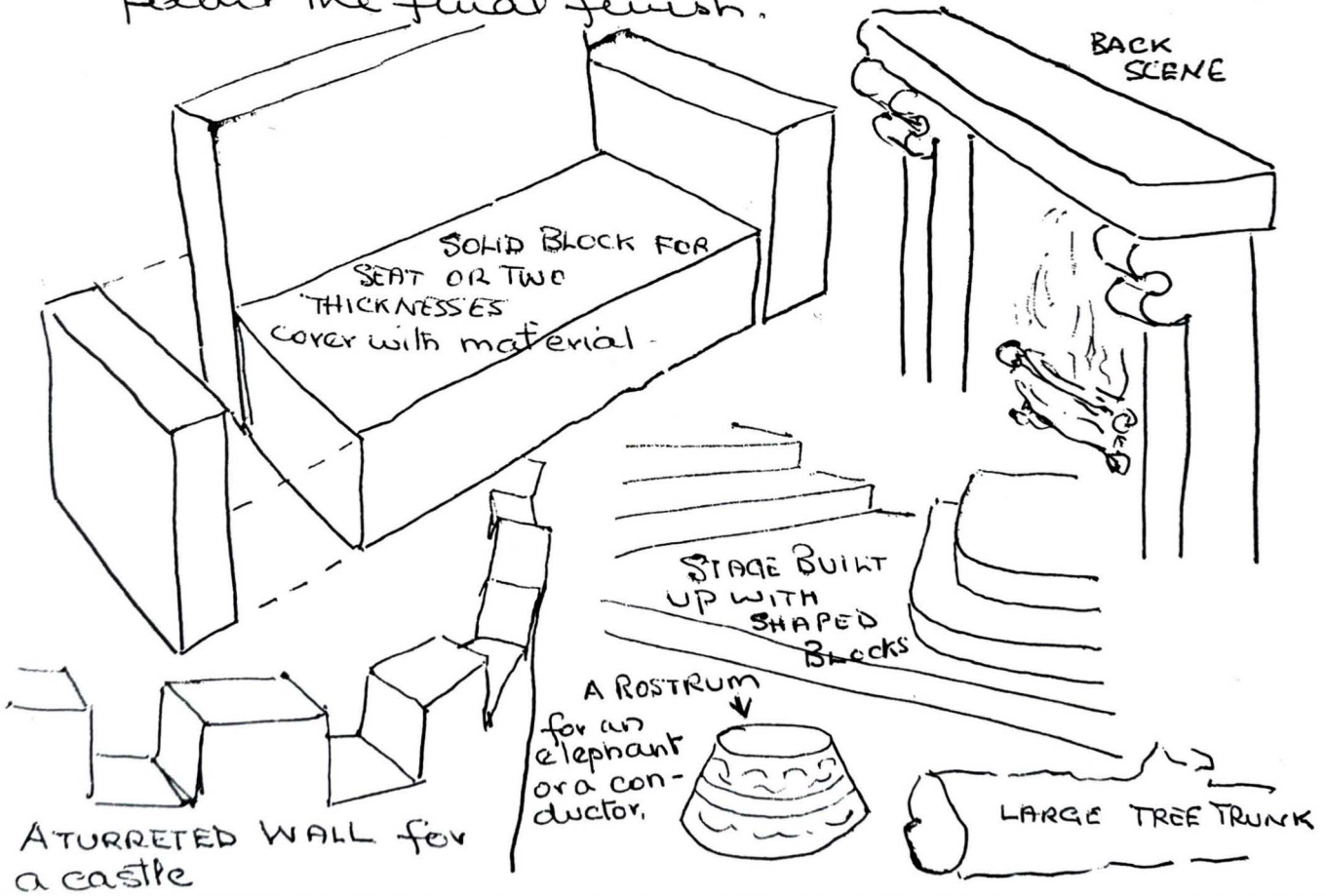
The base should be made from thick wood (about $\frac{5}{8}$″ to 1″ thick) cut into a 'D' shape. Nail the aluminium round the curved part and add the two strips with grooves and the bar across the top. Support the uprights by nailing the aluminium to them. Another shape of aluminium or hardboard is nailed to the underside of the horizontal bar. Leave a gap between this and the top of the curved aluminium. Make sure all the edges of the aluminium are smooth. If they are not rub them with sandpaper. Screw a batten holder to the base and connect up. Either run them all together, in parallel, or run them individually back to a central point. You can fix the three holders to a board by single screws so they can swivel.



You may prefer to make two long troughs, each to hold three lights which can be hung vertically or placed horizontally, either above the opening, thus shining back on to the stage, or as footlights outside the curtains. Or you can use both. A switch on the top to cut out one or two lights is useful.

PROPS made from SPONGE RUBBER.

Sponge rubber can be bought in sheets of almost any thickness. It is easily cut & shaped & glued together. You can make rocks & boulders, tree trunks, low walls, turrets & arches, solid furniture such as sofas, armchairs, heavy tables, stools. It is also useful for building steps or for raising the back of your stage in tiers. It can be added to your back scene to give a more 3-dimensional effect, such as round the fireplace or windows. Once you have cut your pieces out & glued them together & shaped them as desired apply ample paint allowing it to soak in, two or three time maybe necessary (use household paint or size) This makes the sponge rubber hard & durable, then paint the final finish.


BACK SCENE
SOLID BLOCK FOR SEAT OR TWO THICKNESSES
Cover with material
STAGE BUILT UP WITH SHAPED BLOCKS
A ROSTRUM
for an elephant or a conductor.
LARGE TREE TRUNK
A TURRETED WALL for a castle

How It Began

I promised in the last magazine to tell you another story about "How It Began"—so this is the story of the round wooden heads.

At first I turned them on a lathe: those of you who have done any woodturning will know how difficult it is to turn a nice round ball, they seem to come out all shapes from ovals to squarish rounds (see diagram). Well, I suppose it did mean their heads were all different shapes, but as we were wanting them in large quantities an alternative supply had to be found. So imagine my delight when one day during the Mop Fair in Marlborough High Street I came across a large box of the roundest-looking wooden balls I had ever seen. "Four balls for 6d." the man said, thrusting them into my hands. "Just what I want," I said, "where did you get these from?", but he would not tell me—I suppose he thought I was going to set up another coconut-shy stall. So I went off and fetched MacBoozle—he had not been "born" very long. Incidentally, all the puppets used to have birth dates—MacBoozle was Christmas Eve 1948, and Lulabelle, New Year's Eve following. There was "Wags", made mainly from three coconut-shy balls and a bulbous nose, the Donkey with a carrot, the Ostrich that laid an egg—they all had birthdays. It is sad how they fall out, but it is never recorded as a "death" because they have a way of being revived; anyway a puppet is immortal, with some being a little more so than others!

Now where was I?—Oh! Yes—MacBoozle had leapt up on to the box of balls, tapped his head and said, "This is what he wants the balls for". At that Mr. Bunce became very friendly and gave me the name of some woodturners at Stroud, Their main job is to make wooden balls for Fair men. They use "under wood" as opposed to sawn timber; this is the wood from the branches as against the trunks of the trees. A coconut-shy ball is $2\frac{1}{8}''$ diameter, so the branches are cut up in this length, but ensuring they are anywhere between $2\frac{1}{2}''$ to $3\frac{1}{2}''$ in diameter. This chunk of wood, still with its bark around it, is placed on a capstan lathe between two points, a lever is pulled and the ball is gripped by the "driving dog", which is spinning all the time. Instantly the chunk of wood is made to spin, and a shaped cutting tool is drawn into it. There is a cloud of sawdust and bark, and a second later, out drops a beautiful round ball. If you look closely at a coconut-shy ball you will see one end has a mark where the "dog" has gripped it, and the other end has just a small round hole.

We put the neck in the small round hole end, and the rough end is covered with hair and possibly a hat. The tool for this particular shape is a half-round tube $2\frac{1}{8}''$ in diameter. It could be a flat tool with the cutting edge shaped to form the ball, but for maintaining its shape the first type is best. Now we have hundreds of different shapes turned in this manner, from heads to boots, buckets and bodies. To get them really smooth they are put in a great big barrel that slowly revolves so that the parts rub against each other until all the rough spots are smooth. It sounds like the waves on a steep shingle beach.

DaSilva Marionettes

Once upon a time there was a young man who had a vivid imagination. During his school-days he was often chastised for allowing this imagination and his world of dream fantasy to get out of control. He would spend hours peering through the peephole of his model theatre and focusing tiny coloured lights on miniature scenery. One day this young man, whose name was Ray DaSilva Palmer, chanced to meet a dancer called Joan; they were married and shortly afterwards set off upon a trip of adventure around the world.

Their first stop was Canada, which they enjoyed so much that they forgot about the rest of their tour and settled there for seven years. During this time they made several journeys into the United States where they were occasionally booked to present their "English Punch and Judy Show". One such booking was at an American puppet festival and it was here that Ray and Joan discovered a world of fantasy of more elaborate proportions than either had imagined to exist. The American puppet presentations seemed so much more exciting, theatrical and more entertaining than any show which they had seen in England. Fired with enthusiasm from this and other puppet festivals Ray and Joan started creating their own puppets and plays and so "The DaSilva Marionettes" were born.

In 1962 they returned to this country with a wealth of experience from shows they had presented in such places as "The Canadian National Exhibition" and "The Music Hall", Houston, Texas (where they entertained an audience of 3,000 crippled children).

Since that time their marionettes have given many repeat performances in Europe and throughout Britain. Their puppet stages have been erected in stately homes, TV studios, the largest theatres, night clubs, schools and institutions of all kinds and recently in front of a church high altar! This list illustrates the appeal of the DaSilva Marionettes and in the words of more than one journalist "they are fantastic".

Ray and Joan own the only self-contained portable puppet theatre in this country. It seats an audience of 200 and was used during the 1967 summer season at Morecambe.

Another new exciting puppet concept currently being initiated here by the DaSilva's is "Puppet Theatre in the Round" (i.e. with the audience on all sides, as in a circus). They design and construct all their own puppets and whilst recognising that the traditional crafts of wood carving etc. are indigenous to puppetry they are continually exploring new materials and experimental techniques.

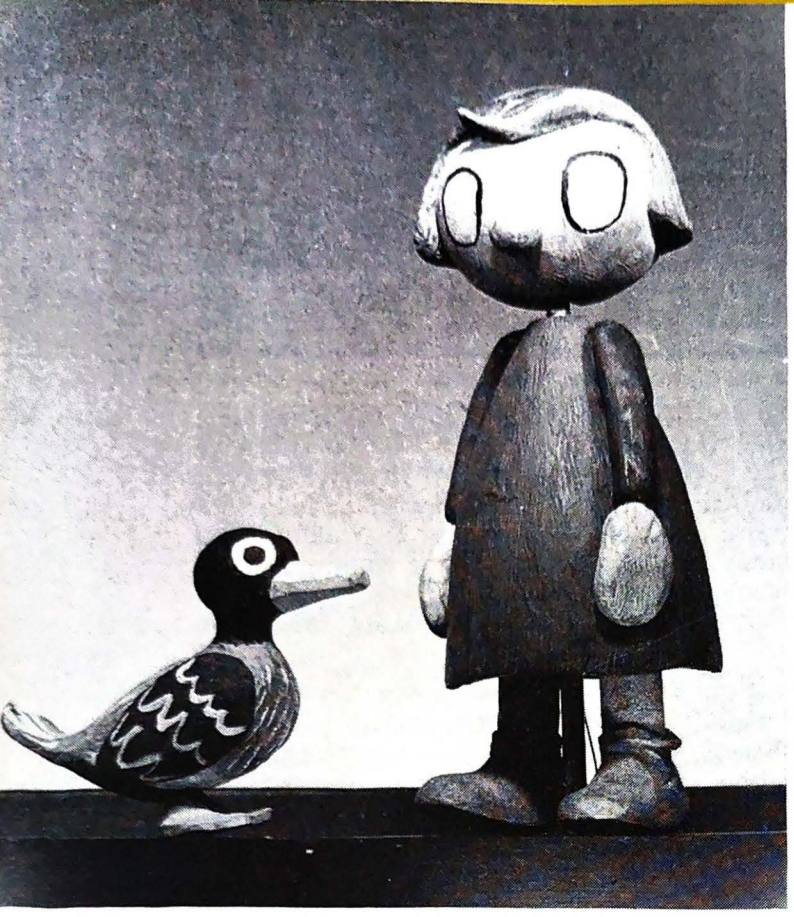
Ray and Joan DaSilva love their life work despite the many frustrating setbacks with people who are antagonistic towards puppets, or those who imagine them only to be suited to very young children. These people usually have this attitude because at some time or other they have had to endure one of the many third-rate "professional" shows which have given to Britain its present generally low puppet standard.

In common with a very small number of other puppeteers, the DaSilvas are attempting to give such persons the opportunity to appreciate good puppetry, in the hope that eventually as more people acquire puppet sense there will be greater recognition, by official bodies, for the true art of puppetry, and subsequently the establishment of more permanent puppet theatres in this country.

A fairytale should have a happy ending but this cannot be told because the story is not yet complete. The DaSilvas' life may appear to be rich and glamorous, indeed it is sometimes quite exciting, but it is often a struggle to "make ends meet", and usually all the income from each show goes towards building future productions.

Perhaps one day puppetry will be regarded as an art form in this country and puppeteers will be assisted with grants towards their work as in the live theatre and other arts, but meanwhile the DaSilvas will continue their work of bringing new exciting puppetry to their audiences of school-aged children and adults as long as they can do so.

Maybe you too can play a part in this story, for the DaSilvas have to depend mainly upon "word of mouth" advertising, so do go to see their show if it comes your way and then tell your friends all about it.



Dick Whittington and Friend from "The Story of Dick Whittington"—Puppet Arts, Woodstock, N.Y., U.S.A.

Cat's Meow – Granny Hangeborg, who once danced with the Dallas Symphony, tries to remember if she has packed everything for her trip to the 2nd International Puppet Festival in Great Britain.

British Unima Bulletin

Special Colwyn Bay Edition

June 1968

Written by Jan Bussell, Chairman of the British Section

It was certainly a cosmopolitan week, and a week of peace among nations. I personally encountered puppet enthusiasts from no less than 15 different countries. There was a coach party of 20 Russians and another of some 30 Americans. Mix in some singing Poles, several German parties, Czechs, Africans, Belgians, Dutch and many others, with a large leavening of British Puppeteers, all trying desperately to understand each other, expressing themselves with puppetry gestures and pencil diagrams, faces aching with smiles, fingers aching with hand-shakes, cheeks sometimes glowing with embraces, the air buzzing with chatter, everyone busy exchanging gifts and greetings—and then you have the very un-British picture of the nightly scene in the Mount Stewart Hotel, North Wales.

I take the performances in the order in which the Praesidium saw them. First came Jane Phillips' Caricature Theatre's remarkable production of *Pilgrim's Progress*. The manipulators wearing black hoods and cloaks, and quite visible (almost Japanese style) though dimly lit, wore the puppets' mask-like faces over their chests, with their own hands and feet inside the costumes to complete the figures. There was no puppet stage as such, the performers working

against black drapes and on rostra. There were also some marotte-like characters, with a magnificent dragon of polythene that looked all of 20ft. long and was operated by two manipulators. Another very effective use of polythene was to represent the Slough of Despond in which Pilgrim is nearly drowned. Excellent costumes and colour schemes, good lighting and very good taped sound. This was certainly the most original and "different" performance of the Festival—but was it Puppetry or Mask Theatre? And does it matter? Must one draw such a line?

Herr Kurock and his son from Bochum, Germany, presented their "Theatrum Magicum", something quite different from the spinning manipulative skill of the last Festival. This was a rod show with largely abstract flat shapes, sometimes with jointed sections, sometimes representing people, sometimes disintegrating and forming new shapes and patterns before our eyes, in a series of short sketches and comments and poems recorded on tape, with announcements in English. I found it all a little obscure, my German not being up to much.

The Theatre des Marionnettes Liegeoises, directed by M. Pinet and his son (the fourth generation to work this traditional theatre) scored a marked success. The puppets are similar to the Sicilian puppets, operated by one stiff wire. In this story Roland sells his soul to the Devil in return for regaining his youth—to comic wisecracks by the ever-present Tchantches. Of course the battle scenes with the stage piled high with corpses are the big moments of the show.

George Latshaw, from the United States, with his rod-glove figures presented a disquieting play called *"The Flattening of Dexter Foster"* or "Help, I'm a Pancake!" In this our child hero becomes so involved with a popular cartoon television series that he somehow gets transformed into the programme and takes part in the two-dimensional world of fiction—which does not altogether live up to his hero-worshipping hopes.

Professor Press's *Soirée Fantastique* almost defies description. Here was our bewigged and bewhiskered Percy performing feats of magical skill with splendid Victorian banter: followed by a Punch show which proved, if proof were needed, that he was in the very top of his form.

Of course, *"Die Hohnsteiner"* with Herr Arndt's charming gentle Kasper could not be faulted. They presented a play about the foolish citizens of a foolish town in which Kasper becomes delightfully involved. To me this perhaps offered the ultimate perfection in timing and acting; but I suppose of a former generation?

Also perhaps of a former generation, but equally on top of their particular form, were Buster and Madge with the Stavordale Marionettes in their open stage string puppet variety programme compèred by Ruffles. And the same comment might well be made of Eric Bramall's *"Dancing Months"* and his *"Mikado"*, and his always staggering manipulative technique in his Cabaret performances. All these performances simply brought the house down, but some over-sophisticated Praesidium palates craved for something new.

There was an evening of puppet films, starting at 10.30 p.m., in which some BBC puppet films were shown and also a film of the other Colwyn Bay Festival of five years ago. The big picture (ending about 2 a.m.) was *"Lili"*, and I believe some people stayed the course.

Barry Smith presented an interesting and original performance with gloves and rods, assisted by Christopher Leith. Barry plans shortly to become a full-time professional puppeteer, and has some good new ideas to offer. The most interesting aspect of his performance to me is his technique of occasionally appearing in vision with his puppets. This, of course, has been done a great deal with strings; but with gloves and rods, when the puppet is necessarily on much the same level as its operator's face, this poses a new series of questions and problems.

Clifford Heap's Miniature Theatre (staged at 10 p.m.) was, I regret to say, the only performance I missed. But I heard very complimentary reports from more stalwart puppeteers than I.

Dick Myers (USA) in his "Puppet Arts" presented two plays: *"Dick Whittington"* and *"Cinderella"*. He works single-handed to tape, and uses rod puppets with good head, arm

and leg movements, but with stiff bodies that look as though they have been turned on a lathe. He has invented a convention by which only the backcloth is lit for scene changes, which are quite elaborate and done with no lowering of the curtain. Too slow for me, but liked by many.

The Polish State Theatre Arlekin, directed by Henryk Ryl, lived up to their reputation. They presented three items, the first a folk tale about a hunter who helps to free a trapped bear, introducing a number of animals. The hunter was human and the animals were humans too, wearing enormous masks that almost completely enveloped them. The second item was presented with Turkish-style shadow puppets, brightly coloured, on a 20ft. screen. It was a gay story about the peasant who saves the kingdom from a terrible fire-breathing dragon which has previously overcome all the knights and strong men in a royal tournament. Of course the hero wins the Princess. The third item was with simple rod puppets designed by Adam Killian, a gay piece of much the same period, when the heroine is rescued in the nick of time from the enemy soldiers, while our hero is himself away at the wars. These items went with great verve and pace, the eight artistes singing the words live throughout, to recorded music, a technique that seems to work very well. An interesting feature of their performance was that the decor in each case was made up by building up the 20 or so boxes used to transport the puppets, which had varying designs painted on different sides.

The last show of the Festival was by the DaSilva Marionettes, an elaborate open stage presentation first of a *"Circus Fantasy"*, introducing a number of variety acts but with a story running through and a comic twist to finish. After an interval we were given a Canadian Indian legend, very well lit and presented. And when the curtain rose for their third part, behold! the large marionette fit-up had vanished and in its place was the DaSilva glove booth on which they presented their *"Jack and the Beanstalk"*. Perhaps this was the most popular show with the children at the Festival, though one must not forget Violet Philpott's performances at one of the Exhibition Halls, which catered for the youngest age group.

Unfortunately Andre Tahon, who should have closed the Festival with his "Marottes", was unable to arrive owing to the troubles in France, and a communal performance was organised for the Saturday evening.

The Play-writing Competition is always open. Plays received will be filed and judged just before making up the next magazine. Please remember these plays must be original. Try and get as much action into them as possible. That is what makes a good puppet play. Clear writing and layout will be considered in judging the winner. Please be sure to put your name and address at the top of your play. Two puppets are awarded for first prize and one puppet for second prize.

Something about 'Unima'

In Colwyn Bay, North Wales, recently an International Puppet Festival was held; you may know about this but did you know that it was sponsored by UNIMA? Do you, in fact, know about UNIMA, have you ever heard about it? May I tell you a little about this important international puppet organisation which was formed nearly forty years ago and now has thousands of members from over forty different countries.

The word UNIMA stands for "Union Internationale de la Marionnette" which may be translated "International Puppet Association" (note that the French for Puppet is Marionnette —two n's and two t's). The Headquarters of UNIMA is at Prague in Czechoslovakia where the Secretary-General, Professor Dr. Jan Malik, is in charge. Some countries have their own national organisation who report to and transmit subscriptions to Prague; these are known as National Sections and the British Section has its headquarters in London under the chairmanship of Mr. Jan Bussell, of Muffin the Mule fame.

The functions of UNIMA are many and varied. Briefly the object of the association is to bring together puppeteers from all parts of the world, professional and amateur, so that they may meet and correspond, to discuss their ideas and problems and by association further their art. There is no race, language, creed, political or colour barrier. At Colwyn Bay a group of Americans were having a lively discussion with some Russians helped by an Egyptian who was translating via English, German, French and Arabic.

From Prague come regular Calendars of Puppet Festivals with details of the organising authorities and addresses from which further information can be obtained. These festivals are probably one of the most important functions in UNIMA. It is here where the puppeteers meet face to face and make new friends and greet old ones. At Colwyn Bay there were something like two hundred overseas visitors from seventeen different countries. Next year there will be a very important Festival at Prague when the fortieth anniversary of the formation of UNIMA will be celebrated, followed immediately by another festival at Crudim (or Khrudim) also in Czechoslovakia. But all of these festivals are not so far away. France, Belgium, Holland and Germany, all easy of access these days, stage frequent festivals and most exciting they are.

At the head of UNIMA is the President. He is the figurehead who represents Puppetry in the view of the whole world. He is elected by the members of the Management Committee and naturally he is always a well known and respected puppeteer. The first president was from Czechoslovakia, Josef Skuppa, famous for his creation of Spejbl and Hurvinek, the father and son string puppets, and many other characters. During the war UNIMA went underground and was not able to perform its normal functions; it was not until 1957 that it was able to once again participate in international affairs. A German puppeteer, Max Jacob from Hamburg, was now elected president. His hand puppets travelled far and wide with the well-known Hohnsteiner Company which included the traditional character Kasper. They appeared at Colwyn Bay at the Festival in 1963. In December 1967 Max Jacob died but his puppets did not die and appeared once again at Colwyn Bay this year. The present president was elected at Colwyn Bay during this year's festival and is our own Jan Bussell. This is a tremendous honour, not only for Jan Bussel but for the whole of British Puppetry. Jan is well known outside this country, perhaps even better than he is here; he became known in this country with Muffin but he has made many more important contributions to the art of puppetry. His puppets number more than a thousand.

The Editor will not allow me any more space this time but I would very much like to tell you more about UNIMA and also tell you the stories of some of the famous puppeteers like Josef Skupa and Max Jacob. Perhaps the Editor will allow this if you would like it.

BILL MEACOCK.

The Great Sleigh Mystery

By DAWSON CORLEY, 2614 Huron Street, Baton Rouge, Louisiana, 70805, U.S.A.

Characters:

1. SANTA CLAUS can be an old man wearing anything you wish—he never has his Christmas suit on in the play.

2. WORKER (Peter) is an average looking person—I used Hansel.

3. MAID (Mary) a young girl of about 20.

4. CLOWN—just a toy, but is the leader and spokesman for all the toys of the workshop.

5. DOG (Samantha) can be any type dog you wish—the black poodle is good.

6. HORSE (Seymour)—the stupider-looking the better!

SCENE

A toyshop with a door down left, a door down right, and a door up left (DL), (R), (UL). The up left door is on the left wall, not on the back wall. There is a large window in the back wall. These windows have to be hinged, because they must blow open. Behind the window there should be a snowy scene of blue skies and snowy hills with snow on the window ledge and panes. You can use detergent for snow, and at various times, especially when the windows blow open, drop it behind the window.

The walls should be filled with as many toy shelves as possible These shelves should be filled with as many toys (small) or little puppets as you can find. Strings should be attached to all these toys so that during the march there will be plenty of action on stage. Over the toy shelf between the two doorways on the left there should be a sign reading "Merry Christmas".

Time: Christmas Eve, about 4 o'clock that afternoon.

As scene opens, Santa is looking over the toys.

(Enter Worker).

WORKER: The toys are ready for inspection, sir.

SANTA: Good! Good! Yes, they all look fine, but I would like to see them work. The children would be very disappointed if they all got toys that didn't dance, jump, walk, or do something. None of my toys will just sit. The will all move and give pleasure to the children that get them tomorrow morning.

WORKER: Yes sir! Toys, Attention!

(Music begins very softly and becomes louder as the toys on the shelves begin to jump up and down—you can work out their movements to satisfy yourself. I found that Victor Herbert's "March of the Toys" from "Babes in Toyland"—if you can't get this, a march will suffice).

SANTA: Wonderful! That was beautiful! I'm sure the children will be very happy with these gifts.

WORKER: I'm so glad they please you. Isn't it about time to load the sleigh? You'll be leaving in about four hours. Why, it will be dark in about thirty minutes.

SANTA: No, no, let's wait till about dark. I have some last minute inspecting to do.

WORKER: Yes, sir. I'll have the workers get the reindeer to go.

SANTA: It's awfully foggy—you'd better have Rudolph put as lead. And have them shine his nose—we'll need all the light we can get!

(*Enter* MAID) R.

WORKER: Oh, here comes Mrs. Claus's maid.

(*Exit* WORKER) DL.

MAID: Mr Claus, your wife sent me to ask you if you have a clean suit to wear tonight.

SANTA: Yes, yes, I sent one to the washroom yesterday, but you could have it laid out on my bed for me to put on.

MAID: I'll have it ready. Oh, your wife also said to tell you not to forget to take your cough medicine. You don't want to wake up all the children coughing, now do you?

SANTA: No, you're right. I promise I'll take it before I leave.

MAID: Good, I'll tell your wife.

(MAID *exits*) R.

SANTA: Oh, Samantha! Here, Sam!

(*Enter* DOG) UL

DOG: Bark! bark! bark!

SANTA: Run out to the stables and get Peter, my worker.

DOG: Bark! bark!

(DOG *exits*) DL.

SANTA: Ha! ha! ha!—that Samantha is so funny.

(MAID *enters*) R.

MAID: Mr. Claus, your wife would like to see you in your bedroom.

SANTA: Thank you, Mary. My, my, it's getting late. Why it is already getting dark.

(*Exits followed by* MARY) R.

BLACKOUT.

(If you are unable to blackout your stage easily, you can close the curtain, although this will stop the action—once the lights are out, flash them on and off as you lower the witch on to the stage—if you close the curtain, hit them lightly to give the effect of someone passing—this has to be done because the witch cannot get in the snow.)

WITCH: He he he! Now to start my plans. I've travelled a long way just for this special deed. Now that I am here, no one will stop me. Oh! Someone's coming. I must hide (*she hides behind toy shelf*).

(*Enter* DOG *and* WORKER).

DOG: Bark! bark! bark!

WORKER: What is it, Samantha?

(DOG *looks around, then realises* SANTA *isn't there . . . he whines and sinks to the floor in shame*).

WORKER: Silly dog! Always playing games. Now leave me alone. I have work to do. Tonight's the big night, you know. Now run along, you silly dog.

(DOG *barks and exits*) R.

(WORKER *exits as he complains about dog*) DL.

(WITCH *comes out from behind toy counter*).

WITCH: The big night indeed! If I have my way, it won't be such a big night anywhere but here, anyway. (*She spies the "Merry Christmas" sign over the shelf—she hits it*). Oh! How I hate Christmas! Those little brats all over the world are so happy when they see all these presents. That makes me sick! Well, this is one year they won't be happy. Im going to stop Christmas! Oh what fun I'll have! By stealing Santa's sleigh, he'll have no way to take the toys to the kids and he'll have to call off Christmas! Heee heee heee! That will be splendid! I'll just hide here till I can get to the sleigh house to steal the sleigh. I must hide quickly now.

(*Enter* SANTA) R.

SANTA: Where's the sleigh? Where is the sleigh? We'll be late. Oh Seymour!

(*Enter* HORSE) UL.

HORSE: Whinnies and snorts.

SANTA: Go out to the stables and get Peter, my worker. Bring him to me here. Quickly now. He was supposed to have been here a long time ago.

HORSE: Snorts, whinnies. (HORSE *exits*) DL.

(MAID *enters*) R.

MAID: Mrs Claus sent me to tell you it's time to take your medicine.

SANTA: Thank you, Mary. I'll be there in a minute or two.

(*Exit* MAID) R.

(*Enter* WORKER *and* SEYMOUR) DL.

WORKER: You wished to see me, sir?

SANTA: Yes, I sent for you a long time ago. Samantha was sent to get you.

WORKER: Oh no! When we got here there was no one around. I thought Sam was playing games, and because I was very busy I went back to the stables. I'm very sorry.

SANTA: Oh, that's alright. It was really my fault. I shouldn't have left after I sent for you. (*pause*). Where is the sleigh? It was supposed to have been here an hour ago.

WORKER: I don't know were it can be. I will take Seymour and go get it myself.

SANTA: YOU DO THAT! I have to go take my medicine. (SANTA *exits*) R.

(WORKER *and* HORSE *exit*) DL.

(*As the* WITCH *comes out from behind the toy shelf, the* CLOWN, *which is on one of the toy shelves, comes down as the Witch says her next line*).

WITCH: He! he! he! Now to stop Christmas!

CLOWN: No, you can't do that!

WITCH: And who are you to stand in my way? You're just a stuffed toy. Besides, there's just one power stronger than me—and that's snow.

CLOWN: You're wrong. There is another power stronger than you, and we are that power!

WITCH: And just who is *we*?

CLOWN: Why, all my friends. I am their leader. I control their actions. If Santa wants to see us work, I tell the toys what to do and when to do it.

WITCH: Then if I get rid of you, I will not have any trouble from this bunch of stuffed pests.

CLOWN: Right! I mean no! Leave me alone! No! No! Don't! Please don't! Ahhhhhhhhh!

(*the* CLOWN *kicks and screams as he slowly floats up and out through the downstage left door—make it look like he is fighting to get back to the ground, but the* WITCH'S *spell is floating him upward—all this time the* WITCH *should be going through the movements of casting a spell*).

WITCH: Ah ha! I see that silly little worker coming with the sleigh! All the easier for me. I can simply steal the sleigh while he goes to get the reindeer.

(WORKER *enters leading* SEYMOUR, *who is pulling the sleigh*) DL.

(WITCH *hides*).

WORKER: Whoa, Seymour! Now turn the sleigh around. Okay, Seymour, you can go.

(SEYMOUR *exits*) DL.

WORKER: I must go get Santa so we can load the sleigh. (WORKER *exits*) R.

(WITCH *comes out from behind toy shelf*).

WITCH: Spirits of Evil, hear what I say,
Help me to get rid of this sleigh,
Don't make it heavy, just make it light,
So I can float it right into the night.
(*The sleigh begins to wiggle and jerk by means of strings*).

WITCH: Ah! I have succeeded! Away with you, sleigh! (*exits just as* CLOWN *did through down left door—sleigh goes out slowly—not jumping, kicking or screaming*).

WITCH: Here they come. Drat them! I hope that sleigh gets blown all the way to the South Pole! (*she hides*).

(*Enter* SANTA *and* WORKER) R.

SANTA: You run and get the workers so we can load the sleight. (*pause*). I thought you were going to get the sleigh.

WORKER: The sleigh! It was here when I left! Someone has stolen the sleigh!

SANTA: Oh this cannot be!

WORKER: It's true! It's true! The sleigh's gone!

(*A big gust of wind is heard* (*this wind is not necessary*), *the windows blow open and snow comes through the window—after the* WITCH *shrieks and the audience's attention is back on the puppets, you can cut the amount of snow falling to just a little bit or you can quit completely*).

SANTA: Oh, what a storm! It might be better if we do call off Christmas.

(*From behind the toy shelf a shriek is heard—and the* WITCH *jumps out*).

WITCH: Ohhh! The snow . . . it's getting all over me. I'm dying . . . dying . . . ahhhhh! . . . (*she sinks to the floor*).

(*The* CLOWN *slowly floats back through door—and lands on floor*).

SANTA: What's going on around here?

CLOWN: That witch came here to stop Christmas. She floated me away when I tried to stop her.

SANTA: But you're just a toy.

CLOWN: When we are made, we are granted one of two wishes by The Great Toymaker in the Sky. We can either be toys and have a life, or be stuffings for mattresses. Naturally most of us prefer being toys, but others want a lazy life and become mattresses. So you see, our ambition is to become some child's best friend, and we weren't going to let that witch stand in our way. (*pause*). By the way, what's your sleigh doing floating around up there? I almost ran into it.

WORKER: That's it! She floated the sleigh away too! Then we couldn't load the toys and you would have to call off Christmas!

SANTA: Yes! I see now! But what of my sleigh? Now that she is dead, the spell should be broken.

WORKER: Why here it comes now!

(*Sleigh slowly comes through down left doorway*).

CLOWN: Dead? The witch is dead?

SANTA: Why, yes. A big wind came up and the windows blew open. She jumped out from behind the counter and started complaining about snow. Then she died.

CLOWN: Now I remember! She said snow was the only thing more powerful than her.

SANTA: Well, enough of this . . . we'll be late. Peter, go get the reindeer. Clown, you get the toys ready to be loaded. I've got to go get on my suit. Dear me, I've lost so much weight I'll probably need a couple of pillows to fill up my suit!

CURTAIN.

THE END.

(NOTE. If you like, you can get a small replica of Santa in his sleigh and fly it across the back behind the window—also the "Merry Christmas" sign can be moved to the front of the stage as the curtain closes.)

Balloon Baloney

By DAVID RILEY (aged 12), 31 Marina Drive, Pemberton, Wigan, Lancs.

Characters: POLICEMAN, MCBOOZLE, a BOY and a DOG.

SCENE I.

AN EMPTY PARK BENCH.

(*Some leaves blow across the stage. Enter* POLICEMAN L).

P.C.: Very quiet round 'ere today.

(*Enter* MCBOOZLE, R, *running*).

P.C.: 'Ello, 'ello, 'ello! What's all this 'ere?

MCB.: Aaah! Ma bonnie wee laddie! An' what is it ye'r a-wantin'?

P.C.: Where might you be off to in such an 'urry?

MCB.: I'm off to the store. Hoots mon, it's a tragedy. I've run out of whisky.

P.C.: Well, you be careful, or I'll be round with me little black book.

MCB: Och mon! I know when I've had enough.

P.C.: Just you be careful, that's orl I can say.

MCB.: Bah! (*exit* L).

P.C.: I'd better keep an eye on him. (*exit* L).

CURTAIN.

SCENE II.

THE SAME, THAT NIGHT.

(*Crash off. Drop a couple of tins with glass in, but keep the lids on. A light flashes off,* L. (*pencil torch*). *Enter* P.C. R. *running*).

P.C.: 'Pon my word, I wonder what that was.

(*Exit* L. *In a moment he returns with* MCB. *who is very dirty*).

MCB.: Yah! Leggo! I'm all right. It was that daft duck.

P.C.: Come on! Know when you've had enough, do you? What were you doing in the duck pond in your car, anyway?

MCB.: Hoots! I ran off the grass when that duck attacked me.

P.C.: Hmph! You stay 'ere while I get me balloon. (*exit* R.)

MCB.: Silly old twerp. (*Enter* P.C. R. *with balloon*).

P.C.: 'Ere, blow into this (*holds out balloon. Green spot on*).

P.C.: Aha! Come on to the station.

MCB.: I'm not going doon to the station, especially with you. (*exit* L. *running*).

P.C.: Oi you! (*runs after him*).

CURTAIN.

SCENE III.

THE SAME, NEXT DAY.

(P.C. *is seated on bench, head in hands. Enter* BOY *with dog,* L.).

P.C.: 'Ello, sonny (*gives a hollow groan*).

BOY: Gee! What's wrong? Aren't you goin' to nick me for havin' Pimple out bout a lead?

P.C.: Nah! Might as well be hanged for a sheep as a lamb.

BOY: Golly! What's happened?

P.C.: I caught McBoozle last night, but he got away. My sergeant's going to be 'oppin' mad.

BOY: Here, I've got an idea. Have you anything of his, 'cos then Pimple could track him down.

P.C.: Yes. His jacket tore. (*Holds something to dog's nose. It runs off* R. *with* P.C. *and* BOY *after it. They re-enter* L. *after a few moments*).

P.C.: Well, that was a lot of use. He'd drunk so much whisky that the dog just led us to a pub.

(*Enter* MCB. R. *at back. He creeps slowly across stage, attempting to avoid detection*).

BOY: I don't think you'll ever catch him without a gallon of free whisky.

MCB. (*who is now halfway across stage*): What's that, mon? Free whisky? I'm handing myself in.

P.C. (*rushing across stage and seizing* MCB.): Cor luvaduck! (*He marches* MCB. *off stage* L.).

BOY: Well, it only goes to show what can happen when you've only got half the story.

CURTAIN.

The Invasion of the Pelham Puppet Factory

By MELVYN BAGSHAW, 43 Great George Street, Rochdale, Lancs.

Characters: CLOWN, BOY, GIRL, MONSTER.

The scene is set in the Pelham Puppet Factory. Six puppet boxes, arms and legs of puppets.

(*Owl sound. Strange humming sound, beam of light, spaceship lands,* MONSTER *walks in*).

MONSTER: Ha ha ha haa! there's enough wood in here to make me the richest man on Wooderlunar. Wood on Wooderlunar is like gold on earth, but it has to be special wood like Pelham uses for their puppets.

(*Puppets come alive night*).

BOY PUPPET: Psst! Clown! there's somebody here. I did not think it was morning so soon.

CLOWN PUPPET: It's not morning. Somebody's broke in. It might be a crook.

GIRL PUPPET: No, it's a monster trying to steal all the puppets. Let's get out of our boxes and stop him. Is everyone out?

CLOWN: Yes.

BOY: Yes, lets go.

MONSTER: You won't stop me, take that (*throws wood*). Bah! missed. I'll fire the pain ray at you.

GIRL: Boy, quick, get that on the floor and reflect the ray back at him.

BOY: Done it.

MONSTER: Aaaah! got to get back to the spaceship for the antidote. Oh, no! I can't find it. I'll have to go back to Wooderlunar for it. I'm never coming back to earth again—never, never, NEVER!

BOY: Quick! get into our boxes. It's nearly daylight—we're turning back to wood.

BOY: Oooh!

THE END.

CRITICISM INVITED

Here are two letters from very critical American Pelpups:

From Daniel Tamulonis 806 West Norwegian Street, Pottsville, Pa. 17901, U.S.A.

I recently was fortunate enough to get a very old SL Ballet Girl and I found her box was much more different than your other boxes. It was a lighter yellow and the pictures were different. Instead of: SM Clown there is SM Farmer; SL Monkey there is SS Golliwog; Foal and Horse there is Donkey, yellow Dog, small Caterpillar, Parrot, black Cat and a different Ostrich. The Cowboy and MacBoozle were the same but Mac had Wuff instead of your new horrid Cat. The other side had the same Witch but Mickey Mouse and Goofy instead of Pinocchio, the Mad Hatter instead of Snake Charmer, Walt Disney's Pinocchio and Jiminy Cricket instead of Gepetto, and SL Noddy and SL Big Ears instead of Hansel and Gretel. Most of your old puppets I like much better than your newer ones, like those horrible Pop Singers who we hate indescribably. I'd like to tell you I hate your new SL Red Riding Hood and those hideous new boxes.

From Cathy Kostrey, 1698 First Ave., Pottsville, Pa. 17901, U.S.A.

I was reading one of your old magazines (it was number 2) and I read a part about Andrew Cornes. I see that you followed all his ideas. I read in the next magazine (number 3) about all other Pelpups disagreeing with his stupid ideas. You took his advice so now I want you to take some of mine. Get rid of the following list of puppets: all Pop Singers, Giant, horrible rods, SL Red Riding Hood, get rid of those moulded arms on the SL Girls, Cat, Bengo, Foal, Black Poodle Uk, Wizard, SL Witch, make a better Prince than that soppy one. When we were in New York we saw your SM Girl and Boy, and they don't look at all like the ones in our black and white catalogue. Now for a list of ones to bring back from the past: SS Red Riding Hood, SS Goldilocks, SS Cowboy and Girl, SS Golliwog, SS Sailor, SL Big Ears, SL Noddy, SL Bomb, Twizzle, Mike Mercury etc., Torchy, Crow, Hedgehog, Dachshund, Scottie Dog, Pig, Tiger, Bulldog, Tortoise, the Three Bears, Bull, Cow, Owl, Rabbit, Old Man, Pirate, Mouse, and all your old glove puppets. Katie, Merlin, Wart, Mickey and Minnie Mouse, Walt Disney's Pinocchio and Jimminy Cricket. Should I stop now or keep going? Goofy, Donald Duck, Pluto, Huckleberry Hound, Mr. Jinks, Yogi Bear, Pixi Dixi, Clever Willy, Lulabelle, Poodle "Fi Fi", Elephant, Snake Charmer, SM Baby Bimbo, Little White Bull, Wuff, Sea Horse, Old Caterpillar. Bring back all your Jumppettes with no leg strings. Minni Pups also. Alice in Wonderland characters especially the Mad Hatter. So get with it, Bob. So if you don't bring back these old puppets you might be minus a few members.

Well, what do you like and dislike? It is most helpful for me to have your frank opinions. As I have said earlier, what is popular in one country may not be in another. There is a number of puppets I don't like myself, but they sell so I feel you must like them. The reason a lot of those animal characters have been dropped is because our sales figures show they are not generally so popular as the others. Anyway, let me know what you think.—PELPOP.

Pelpups Write

PAMELA EDWARDS, 238 GREEN MEADOW ROAD, SELLY OAK, BIRMINGHAM, 29.—My father has recently built up my theatre again, and along the top he fixed on some curtain rail so that I could hang my puppets on. Then he put some runners on and now I can slide my puppets from one side of the stage to the other. My father has fixed it up so that I can add on more runners as my puppet collection builds up. Last summer (1967) my friend and I put up a puppet show at our school fete (we were trying to raise money for two school mini-buses). And from charging adults 2d. and children over 5 1d. we managed to raise £3 10s. 6d. which pleased our headmaster. Not long ago I wrote to you for help on what to call my theatre. And you suggested "Dougall's Theatre", and I decided that was a great suggestion, and I stuck to it, and now I have a large D in gold braid on the front of my theatre. So thank you very much for sending me that suggestion. Since the beginning of 1967 my theatre has expanded a lot. At the moment I am making myself a witch puppet, but all the rest of my puppets (and I have 7 of them so far) are Pelham.

DAVID MOODIE, THE ARCADIAN THEATRE, BERNARD LODGE, P.O. BOX 75, SPANISH TOWN P.O., JAMAICA.—I started my Christmas season with "The Legend of Swan Lake", a 'refurbished' production, which was extremely successful. We had to go to the capital, Kingston, to perform it at The Woman's Club. This is a society club, which holds two Christmas parties a year, both for old ladies and children from homes. This production was the entertainment at both parties and they loved it! We had to dismantle our huge stage and have it and all our sets transported to Kingston in a two-ton truck! The Governor-General's wife, Lady Campbell, attended the second performance and said she enjoyed it. I was interviewed by two press reporters, and was also presented with two puppets from Mexico after the show by Mrs. Sylvia MacDonald, the president of the Woman's Club. (This was put in the newspaper—all about the presentation, shows and the party.) The big Christmas production was a hit! The two and a half hour production of Nicholas Stuart Gray's "Beauty and the Beast". We had two performances and made about £100. We had a good crowd each night, just as great as my past summer season. They really loved it, and we were very happy. I'm sending you a programme. The costumes, scenery and sets looked splendid, and your puppets too! You'd never recognise some of them though; they've been changed a lot—hair and costumes, etc. I was interviewed on television and performed a scene from "B & B" as a special Christmas show for children. It was my being on television that brought many who had seen it, and I was glad, as it (the TV) was good publicity for us. "Beauty and the Beast" returns in March, and also "Rebecca". I have written a script for Poe's "The Fall of the House of Usher". I'm writing one for Grimm's "Rapunzel" and I've got a new N. Stuart Gray play "The Other Cinderella", but woe—alas! I must return to England in June to study drama at the Bristol Old Vic Theatre School. That means three whole years, and I shall not be returning to this island.

RICHARD COYNE, 1 WHEATLEY ROAD, BENTLEIGH, MELBOURNE, VICTORIA, AUSTRALIA.—I received a phone call last November from a Mrs. Tozer of Mt. Dandenong, about twenty miles from here. She informed me that she had previously written to you explaining her intentions to form a puppet theatre in Olinda. You sent her some back-issues of "Pelpup News", which she found very helpful. Mrs. Tozer found my name and address in the winter edition of 1965, as I won first prize in the play-writing competition for that issue, and that is how she came to contact me. I can tell you Mrs. Tozer is extremely enthusiastic about the whole project. I am speaking more or less as an outsider for although I am the oldest member, being fifteen, I am the least involved. This is because of the great distance between us. We have gained a lot of help from many people interested in our venture. Mrs. Tozer has received great quantities of material from a department store in the city. They have hired an old bakery in Olinda and are continually working on the fourteen-foot stage they are constructing. Mr. Tozer is an electrician by profession and they have a tape

recorder at their disposal. The newspaper people are continually asking for a report on their progress. The headmaster of their local school has said that all the mothers are eager to see the result. So the "stage" is set except for the "actors". We are making our puppets but, of course, this is a slow process. Mr. Tozer has made a beautiful twenty-inch marionette from a plan sent to him from England. I am making one to the same plan. We will only have a few wooden puppets, the rest are being made by the children by another method. We are thinking of employing shadow puppets and also hand puppets. The stage is constructed for all three. We have sketched out our show and are making the puppets accordingly. As this is the only puppet company belonging to Victoria that is going to be opened to the general public, and on a large enough scale to be publicised by the press, we want to make it a top-class affair. Mrs. Tozer is extremely particular and will not let the show go under way in a slapdash manner. I hope to hear from you soon, and I hope to be able to write to you about our first successful show.

THOMAS CUMMINGS, INVERNESS.—I am writing to tell you about our first puppet show which we performed in our church hall on 28th December, 1967. We call ourselves the "T & D Puppets" and the puppeteers consist of Derek Mathieson, my father and sister, and of course myself. Everyone enjoyed the show and from a silver collection we raised £2 15s. for the church funds.

PETER SANFORD, BRADFORD.—I have got a theatre 5′ by 5′ 6″ and 11 puppets. I have done various shows with my cousin Janet, including one which we did this summer, at which we raised £1 5s. which went to the N.S.P.C.C.

NICHOLAS WESTGARTH, RYDE, ISLE OF WIGHT.— . . . In August 1966, myself and my sister formed a club called the Westgarth Puppeteers with four puppets. Since then Michael Plummer, Tim Bayley and Ian Pellow have joined, though Ian has gone to Southampton and hopes to start a club there. We now have ten puppets, seven of which are Pelham. This Christmas we are doing a play called "Fantasy of Horror" which is full of "spooks".

SUSAN MILLS, SOUTH SHIELDS.— . . . When I wrote to you before I forgot to tell you that I had made a puppet. He is something on the plan of the clown puppet in the Pelpup News, No. 12. He is made of mirror chain with felt attached to it at the waist and the shoulders. To give him some shape I attached a matchbox to the chain at the top. He has a head made from a tennis ball covered in white paper. then cotton wool stuck on for hair. He has oblong wooden feet and hands made from plastic wood moulded over cardboard, then painted a flesh colour. Lastly, his features are made of felt and he has a green felt hat. His dress is made from curtain material and cut from the pattern in Pelpup News, No. 14. I attached nine strings to him, the usual ones for the head, hands, legs and back. I then added two more to his feet at the back. When these strings are pulled, his legs come up at the back and his hands rest on the floor, so enabling him to do a good handstand. I was very pleased with him.

JULIA BERNARD, SIDNEY, OHIO.— . . . I put on a puppet show for my class at school. Another class also watched it. There were about sixty-three children there. I had two helpers, Lynn Kauffman and Beth Hunter. Then our little group put on a show for a church club. We got paid for it. I divided up the money. The skeleton was the hit of both shows. So was the pop group. I have puppets from another country—two, to be exact. They don't look and move as life-like as Pelham Puppets.

KEVIN JOINT, LONDON, S.E.27.— . . . A few things have changed, and for a start I have changed the club from K.P.S.A. to K.M.C. The other reason why the club has changed is because I changed the puppets to string puppets too. My father made me a lovely wooden framework theatre covered in yellow canvas with velvet curtains. There is a space both sides to hang puppets. My father later put footlights on it. This gave a great effect at the shows I do at children's parties.

GRAHAM KILMURRY, AYR, SCOTLAND.— . . . Today my friend and I put on "Sleeping Beauty' from the script by Spencer Williams. Instead of the usual beginning we added a scene with the witch who told the audience how she planned to kill the princess. We ended the scene with her dancing with her broom which appeared out of a hole in the stage in a puff of talcum powder. In the "Haunted Bower" scene we divided the stage by a curtain made from the back-cloth of one of your theatres. I found that this was solid, but when a light was placed behind it, it became transparent. This enabled the witch to appear at the appropriate moment. Apart from this effect we had a flash and a few puffs of smoke. At the fairy's command weeds grew out of the floor. We did this by painting weeds on polythene and pulling it up from the floor.

LARRY O'NEAL, CALIFORNIA, U.S.A.— . . . I'm glad to say Clyde Derrick (Up in the Air) and I have become friends. He lives near me and if it weren't for his play I'd still think I was the only Pelpup in the area. In your next magazine could you please tell how I could keep my puppets' hair from getting messed? I put them in their boxes to keep them from fading between shows and when I took them out their hair looked terrible.

(Use a soft brush or suction cleaner on the hat, hair and clothing with care, of course. Be careful of the girls with long dolls' wig hair.)

PAUL LEHMAN, POTTSVILLE, U.S.A.— . . . We have a puppet filming company called "Bunindell Films Ltd." We produce puppet and animated films. Our library lets us show the films about once every two months. We have several different films. They are "Hansel and Gretel", "Alice in Wonderland", "The Land of Nod", "The Story of the Tea Pot" and "Trails to Treasure", etc. The name Bunindell came from Bunin, the name of an English film about puppets made at Lux Motion Studios in England. Dell was taken from Alice Ladell, the little girl for whom Lewis Carroll wrote "Alice in Wonderland".

The following would like to hear from Pelpups living in their areas, with a view to forming local puppet groups:

ELIZABETH DAVIS, 33 Cloister Gardens, Edgware, Middx.

JOHN ROBERTS, 9 Kenwyn Avenue, Pietermaritzburg, Natal, South Africa.

LESLEY ROGERS, 8 Canberra Road, Bexleyheath, Kent.

STEPHEN FORD, Oak Ridge, Benham Hill, Newbury, Berks.

CLIVE BURNS, 222 Kingsground, Eltham, London, S.E.9.

DEBORAH HAM, 17 Ramsdean House, Roxhampton, London, S.W.15.

ANN ALBACH, 3620, Ovid Ave., Dallas, Texas, U.S.A.

PAULINE HANSEN, 9 Denby Lane, Heaton Chapel, Stockport, Cheshire, would like a pen friend aged 12-13.

KATHRYN THOMPSON, 8 Barnhall Road, Tolleshunt Knights, Nr. Maldon, Essex, would like a pen friend, a boy aged 14-16 living in the British Isles or Holland, able to write English. Interested in reading, pop and classical music, sport and puppetry.

ELIZABETH ROBINSON, Hawthorns, Station Road, Otford, Kent, would like a French and English-speaking pen friend from France, Austria, Switzerland or Germany. Age 13-14, whose hobbies are reading, stamp collecting, dressmaking, skiing, skating and riding. She would also like an English-speaking pen friend from Thailand, aged 13-14.

SUSAN LAMBERT, 41 St. Patricks Avenue, Charvil, Twyford, Reading, Berkshire, would like a pen friend 11-12. Hobbies are writing, reading, modern dancing, puppetry, swimming, sewing and stamp collecting. She would like her pen friend to live anywhere in the British Isles, Australia or New Zealand.

LYNNE MARTIN, 26 Stukeley Road, Holbeach, Spalding, Lincs, would like a girl pen friend living in Great Britain or Ireland, aged 12-13 years. Hobbies are reading and puppetry.

J. E. SHEARS, 51 Norwood Road, Leicester, would like a pen friend in the British Isles or Germany (speaking English). Hobbies are puppetry, animals and stamps.

CHRISTINE DOHERTY, 9 Warren Drive, Greenford, Middlesex, would like a girl pen friend from Italy, Spain or Greece. Hobbies are art, fashions, reading, birdwatching, stamp collecting, nature and music.

CHARLES DAVID HERRMANN, 18 Maple Lane, Levittown, Pennsylvania, U.S.A., would like a pen friend from any members of the club.

YVONNE WEBSTER, 222 Rowan Place, Newton Aycliffe, Co. Durham, would like a pen friend aged 14 living in U.S.A., Japan, Australia or Canada. Hobbies: English, pets, art, pop music and cookery.

DENISE SMITH, 516 N.E. 12th Court, Gainesville, Florida 32601, would like pen friend, 12-14, from England, Spain or Japan who is able to understand English. Hobbies are writing, puppetry and stamp collecting.

ELIZABETH ROMANOW, 5 Hemlock Road, New Haven, Connecticut, U.S.A., would like an English-speaking pen friend, anywhere in the world except the U.S.A., aged 10-11, interested in swimming, reading and puppetry.

JANE ROMANOW, 5 Hemlock Road, New Haven, Connecticut, U.S.A., would like an English-speaking boy anywhere in the world, aged 9-13. Hobbies are sports and animals.

MICHAEL RITTER, 1122 Fairway Drive, Racine, Wisconsin 53405, would like a pen friend in England interested in stamps, football, aeroplanes, golf and puppets, age 10-11.

KAY COBURN, Polmont, Nr. Falkirk, Stirlingshire, Scotland, would like a pen friend from Switzerland or Australia able to write and speak English, aged 12-14, interested in puppetry, horse-riding, swimming and pets.

FIONA MACKOD, 23 Ledmore Road, Charlton Kings, Cheltenham, Gloucestershire, England, would like a girl pen friend from France, Holland or Australia. Interests are Girl Guides, reading, writing, puppetry, animals and nature, knitting and sewing. Can speak French or English.

LYNNE RICHARDSON, 24 Station Road, Long Eaton, Nottingham, would like a girl pen friend in Norway or France aged 10-11, interested in collecting dolls, stamp collecting, reading, puppetry, swimming and pop music. Able to speak and write English.

DEBORAH ATKINSON, Greylands, Rue Desgrons, St. Martins, Guernsey, Channel Isles, would like a pen friend anywhere in the world, must speak or write English, aged 10-12. Hobbies: dancing, swimming, running, pop music, puppetry and writing letters.

KAREN MACIVOR, 18 Lovat Road, Breightmet, Bolton, Lancs., would like a pen friend, aged 13-14, preferably a boy.

LESLEY ANNE SHAW, 28 Kenmore Street, Aberfeldy, Perthshire, Scotland, would like a pen friend from France, Holland, Denmark, Norway or Sweden, preferably a girl aged 11-12, able to speak and write English. Hobbies are puppets, reading and animals.

SANDRA DEWAR, 65 Moness Crescent, Aberfeldy, Perthshire, Scotland, would like a pen friend from Australia, France, Spain or Denmark. A girl aged 11-12, interested in puppets, country dancing and animals.

ANDREW RAINE, 64 West Crescent, Darlington, Co. Durham, England, would like a pen friend living near Darlington, aged 12-13. Hobbies: Marrel Mags, puppetry and puppets of Marrel characters.

ROGER PRIOR, 30001 Champine, St. Claire Shores, Michigan, would like a pen friend living in Australia, Austria or Ireland Preferably a boy. Hobbies: swimming, animals, music, both classical and pop. Age 10-12.

ROSEMARY WYSS, 3218 Brill Road, Indianapolis, Indiana, U.S.A. 46227, would like a pen friend, preferably English speaking, from anywhere in the world. Hobbies are puppetry, reading and swimming.

ANNE DOBRZYN, Treichlers, Pennsylvania, 18086 U.S.A., would like a pen friend in any country, able to speak English. Hobbies: sports, pen pals, stamp and postcard collecting, reading, drawing, writing, and loves all animals.

DEBORAH HAM, 17 Ramsdean House, Roxhampton, London, S.W.15, would like a girl pen friend aged 10-13 living anywhere in the world. Hobbies are puppetry, fashion, pop music, nick-names, needlework and animals.

CHRISTINE UNDERHILL, 133 Woolwich Road, Upper Belvedere, London, S.E.2, would like a pen friend about 17 from any country except the British Isles.

MARJORIE HUNNISETT, 47 Fleet Street, Aylesbury, Bucks, would like a pen friend aged 13-14.

ROSEMARY BESWICK, Slade Hill, Staden, Buxton, Derbyshire, would like a pen friend from France, Canada, Greece, Australia, aged 9-12, interested in animals, pop music and swimming. Must be able to speak and write English.

JANE THORPE, 6 Buckinghamshire Road, Belmont, Durham, would like a pen friend from America or France, aged 9-11, able to speak French or English. Hobbies are music, sewing, reading, maths and puppetry.

WILMA LOW, 36 Loanhead Terrace, Aberdeen A.B.2. 4.S.Y., Scotland, would like a pen friend anywhere in the world, aged 10-11. Hobbies include first aid, Brownies, Scottish country dancing, cycling and skating.

GILLIAN BAXTER, 98 Campbell Road, Eastleigh, Hants, would like a pen friend aged 12-14 from any country in the world. Hobbies are swimming, puppetry and pets.

JENNIFER LEWIS, 80 Three Elms Road, Whitecross, Hereford, would like a pen friend from Spain, aged 11-13. Hobbies are horse riding, swimming, reading and puppetry.

JOANNA GANDY, 20 Kingswood Road, Tadworth, Surrey, would like a pen friend anywhere in the world, able to speak and write English. Hobbies are puppetry and dancing.

LOUISE CANTLE, 12 Marshalls Road, Braintree, Essex, would like a pen friend living in England or Ireland aged 9-10, interested in animals, birds and puppetry.

Printed by Swindon Press Ltd., Victoria Road, Swindon, Wilts, England.